

THE LOCAL'S GUIDE TO HIGHWAY 40: BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

EXPLORE 
Kananaskis

A couple is sitting on a picnic blanket in a grassy field, facing each other. The woman is on the left, wearing a blue shirt and sunglasses, holding a yellow bag of snacks. The man is on the right, wearing a light pink shirt and sunglasses, with his hand near his face. Between them is a large teal YETI cooler and various picnic items like food containers, a bottle of beer, and water bottles. In the background, there is a dense forest of evergreen trees and a large, rugged mountain with some snow patches under a clear blue sky.

TOP PICNIC SPOTS

Barrier Lake

PICNIC & PADDLE

Spread a blanket on the grassy lakeshore, where you can rent a canoe, kayak or paddle board to explore the striking emerald waters. The shoreline is wide, open, and actually comfortable to hang out at. It's the rare picnic spot that doubles as a full afternoon adventure.

What makes it special:

- On-site rentals by **Kananaskis Outfitters** (canoe, kayak, SUP) so you can get on the water instantly
- Easy access + large day-use area
- Mountain views without committing to a hike
- Close to Calgary = great for spontaneous evenings

Local tip: Go early morning or golden hour for optimal tranquility.

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Upper Kananaskis Lake

A PICNIC WORTH THE DRIVE

This is where Highway 40 really feels like you've left the city behind. The water is glacier-fed (chilly!), the scale is massive, and the picnic spots feel more like little hidden coves than designated areas. There are multiple day-use zones scattered around the lake, so you can find your own quiet pocket.

Why locals love it:

- Huge lake = space to spread out
- Multiple viewpoints (forest, shoreline, rocky edges)
- Easy to pair with a short hike
- Feels like a full-day escape
- Best one for dogs if you want a quieter, longer wander

Local tip: Drive a bit past the first parking lot. The best spots are never the first ones.

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Wedge Pond

TRANQUILITY BY THE WATER

Wedge Pond is a favourite for those seeking tranquility by the water. Surrounded by towering peaks and lush forest, it offers a peaceful setting perfect for a laid-back picnic. The pond's calm, reflective surface creates a stunning backdrop—especially for photography. After your meal, take a slow walk along the shoreline loop or just sit and take it in.

Accessible via: Highway 40

Why locals love it:

- Minimal effort, maximum payoff
- Usually quieter than larger lakes
- Perfect for slow mornings or quick resets

Local tip: Come on a weekday morning—it feels like your own private alpine lake.

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Lower Kananaskis Lake Interpretive Trail

LAKESIDE WALK WITH A LESSON

Distance: 6.6 km
Elevation: 246 m
Level: Moderate

This lakeshore trail offers a more intentional way to experience Kananaskis—where the focus isn’t just on the views, but on understanding the landscape around you. Starting near William Watson Lodge, the path follows the edge of Lower Kananaskis Lake, with interpretive signs along the way that share insights into the area’s ecology, wildlife, and history. The elevation gain is gradual and spread out, making it feel steady and manageable rather than strenuous.

What begins as a simple walk becomes something more immersive—pausing to read, taking in the shifting light on the water, and eventually reaching Canyon Creek Campground, a natural place to rest before heading back.

Edworthy Falls via Elbow Lake Trail

SCENIC QUIET CLIMB

Distance: 10 km
Elevation: 401 m
Level: Moderate

This is the kind of hike you choose when you want a bit more solitude, without sacrificing scenery. The trail climbs steadily through dense forest, with occasional glimpses opening up toward alpine meadows ahead. It’s a consistent incline, but manageable, and just when you start to feel it, the terrain softens as you approach Elbow Lake.

From there, everything slows down. The trail levels out, leading you toward Edworthy Falls and a peaceful loop around the lake, where the views fully open up. Timing matters (snow often lingers until mid-June) but if you time your visit taking that into account, you’re in for a treat with fewer crowds and a landscape that feels quietly untouched.

Opal Ridge

STEEP ASCENT, ULTIMATE PAYOFF

Distance: 8.5 km
Elevation: 1,057 m
Level: Hard

This is a hike that gets straight to the point—elevation starts almost immediately, making it a true test for those looking for a serious workout. The trail is well-defined through the forest, steadily pushing upward until you break past the treeline. From there, it turns into a scramble toward the ridge, where the effort pays off in full.

At the top, you’re met with sweeping 360-degree views—rolling ridgelines, layered peaks, and that unmistakable “top of the world” feeling that makes every step worth it. A challenge that rewards you with one of the most expansive perspectives in Kananaskis. Just come prepared, this one demands it!



BEST PATIO VIEWS

Explore All Dining

PHOTO CREDIT: DANIELLE EAGLESON

Blacktail Bar

MODERN, CRAFT COCKTAILS, SOCIAL

Access through Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge lobby or direct patio access outside across the pond in the Village

PRICE RANGE: \$\$-\$\$\$

Blacktail Bar is a trendy mountain lounge offering a wide variety of delicious beverages including craft cocktails and flavorful regional beers. With an inviting ambience and healthy, hearty meal options, it's the perfect spot to unwind by the fire with a drink in hand.

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Woody's Pub & Patio

NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB, CASUAL, LAID-BACK, COMFORT FOOD

Access across from Black Diamond Club, inside Mt. Kidd Manor

PRICE RANGE: \$-\$\$

Looking for a relaxed, easygoing atmosphere with the charm of a neighbourhood pub? Woody's Pub & Patio is your go-to place in Kananaskis Village. Known for its selection of 50 Alberta craft beers and comforting dishes, Woody's offers the perfect setting to enjoy a game of pool with friends or take in the spectacular views from the outdoor patio.

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Summit Restaurant

WELCOMING, CHEERFUL, SCENIC

Inside Kananaskis Country Golf Course

PRICE RANGE: \$\$ - \$\$\$

Voted Diners' Choice 2024, and featuring some of the most beautiful mountain views, Summit Restaurant is located in the clubhouse of the Kananaskis Country Golf Course. Known for their lively, friendly servers, it's the perfect spot to enjoy a delicious meal for all occasions.



BEST SWIMMING HOLES

PHOTO CREDIT: TRAVEL ALBERTA / C&B ADVERTISING

Upper Kananaskis Lake

Upper Kananaskis Lake is iconic to the region—set beneath towering peaks like Mount Sarrail, Mount Pocater, and Mount Indefatigable. It's expansive, dramatic, and feels like a true alpine escape.

While the lake reaches depths of up to 108m, much of the shoreline remains relatively shallow, making it surprisingly accessible for a quick dip. It's the perfect place to cool off after a hike, then settle into a long, scenic picnic along the water.

- Wide shoreline access for easy entry
- Glacier-fed (cold, but manageable on hot days)
- Endless views in every direction

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Wedge Pond

Wedge Pond is the outlier—and for many, the favourite. As the only spring-fed pond in the area, its waters are noticeably warmer than the surrounding glacial lakes. That means you can actually stay in longer than a quick plunge. Small, calm, and incredibly scenic, it's the perfect place to float, paddle, or just wade in slowly.

- Warmer water (by Kananaskis standards)
- Calm, still surface—great for relaxing
- Ideal for longer swims or casual dips

[Get Google Directions](#)

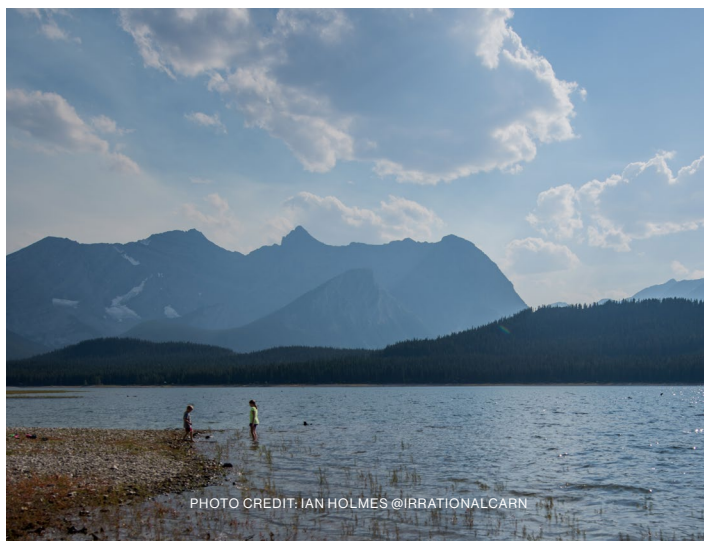


Lower Kananaskis Lake

Just down the road, Lower Kananaskis Lake offers a slightly more accessible and approachable swim. It's closer, generally calmer, and features shallower areas—making it ideal for a more relaxed dip. If you're not looking to commit to a full alpine plunge, this is a great entry point into Kananaskis swimming.

- Easier access + shorter walk-ins
- Shallower zones for gradual entry
- Great for casual swims or quick cooldowns

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Lillian Lake

Lillian Lake is one of those mid-hike rewards that feels almost too perfect to be planned. About halfway up the Galatea Lakes Trail, a steady forested climb opens up to this small alpine lake—quiet, scenic, and incredibly inviting.

What makes it special is its size. Unlike larger glacial lakes, Lillian warms up just enough in the summer months to make a swim actually enjoyable. It's the perfect place to pause, cool off, and take in the surrounding peaks before continuing on. Small, calm, and tucked into the mountains, it's less about a quick dip and more about staying awhile.

- Warmer water (for an alpine lake)
- Calm, sheltered setting
- Perfect mid-hike swim + reset

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Mahikan Trails

INDIGENOUS MEDICINE WALKS

For a guided experience that blends culture, nature, and tradition, Mahikan Trails offers something truly special.

Led by Cree guide Brenda Holder or her son Jordan Holder, these Medicine Walks invite you into a deeper understanding of the land. You'll learn about the traditional uses of native plants, the stories they carry, and the ways Indigenous communities have lived in relationship with this landscape for generations.

[Learn More](#)



Alpine Sound Bath

YOGA & SOUND IN THE MOUNTAINS

Reconnect with your body, calm your mind, and experience the mountains in a more intentional way. Through private and group sessions, **Laura Jaramillo's sound therapy sessions** blends yoga, meditation, and sound healing into immersive outdoor experiences. Surrounded by peaks and open sky, you're guided through breathwork and stillness, with sound vibrations that carry through the landscape in a way that feels both grounding and expansive.

It's less about doing—and more about *feeling present*.

[Learn More](#)



River Surfing

CANOE MEADOWS

At Canoe Meadows, standing waves form along the river, creating the perfect conditions to surf in place. It's a unique challenge that draws experienced riders, adventurous first-timers and curious spectators looking to take in something truly unique to Kananaskis. Set against a backdrop of mountains and rushing water, it's equal parts adrenaline and awe.

[Get Google Directions](#)



UNIQUE TO
KANANASKIS

PHOTO CREDIT: DANIELLE EAGLESON



EVENTS

The Divide Gravel Fest

JUNE 5-7, 2026

Set against the backdrop of the Rockies and the Continental Divide, The Divide is more than a ride—it's a fully immersive gravel experience. From shorter scenic loops (55 km) to full-day efforts (85 km or 110 km), each route takes you deeper into alpine terrain alongside pro riders who share guidance, coaching, and stories from years on the trail.

Back at basecamp, the experience unfolds through curated programming designed to connect, inspire, and restore—bringing together riders, industry leaders, and a shared love for adventure.

- Guided gravel routes for all levels
- Coaching + ride-along insights from pro athletes
- Fireside chats and executive sessions
- Wellness, recovery, and movement sessions
- Workshops exploring the future of gravel, adventure, and sustainability

[Learn More](#)

K100 Relay – 40th Anniversary

JUNE 20, 2026

Celebrating 40 years, the K100 Relay stands as one of Alberta's most iconic team running events.

This 100-mile (160 km) relay begins in Longview, winding through rolling foothills, climbing over Highwood Pass (Canada's highest paved road) and descending into the heart of Kananaskis Country.

Teams of ten runners each take on a leg of the journey, moving through shifting terrain and elevation as the landscape transforms around them—grasslands to alpine, open sky to mountain peaks—before crossing the finish line in Kananaskis Village.

- 10-person relay across 160 km of diverse terrain
- Includes Highwood Pass at 2,206 m elevation
- The only event of its kind permitted in the park

[Learn More](#)

KanFest

JULY 10–12, 2026

Kananaskis' beloved whitewater festival returns for another high-energy weekend on the river. For over 40 years, KanFest has brought together paddlers, river surfers, and outdoor enthusiasts in a celebration of friendly competition, live music, and true river community.

This year, with the completion of Alberta Whitewater Association's Kananaskis River rebuild, the experience is set to be better than ever—delivering enhanced features and even more dynamic conditions for paddlers and surfers of all levels.

Expect a full weekend of action and connection:

- Live music setting the tone from day to night
- Friendly races and competitions across disciplines
- Clinics and classes for those looking to try something new or level up

[Learn More](#)

PHOTO CREDIT: KANFEST

Kananaskis Outfitters

BIG CANOE TOUR

Experience the Rockies by both water and land on this guided adventure. Paddle a traditional voyageur canoe along Barrier Lake, surrounded by mountain views while learning about Canada's early explorers. Then head to Boundary Ranch for a scenic horseback ride through forested trails and open meadows. A relaxed, family-friendly way to explore Kananaskis.

[Learn More](#)



PHOTO CREDIT: DANIELLE EAGLESON

Boundary Ranch

WILD WEST RODEO

A lively Western experience set in the Rockies. Arrive by horse-drawn wagon and enjoy a classic rodeo featuring bronc riding, barrel racing, and an exciting bull riding finale—complete with a charismatic announcer and cowboy flair.

[Learn More](#)



Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge for Groups

For groups planning a getaway, celebration, or corporate retreat, Kananaskis Mountain Lodge offers curated group packages designed to make planning seamless. With access to extensive event spaces, on-site dining, spa experiences, and proximity to the region's top outdoor activities, it's an ideal basecamp for both relaxation and adventure.

[Learn More](#)



GROUP EXPERIENCES



PHOTO CREDIT: DANIELLE EAGLESON



WEDDINGS

Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge

Plan the mountain wedding of your dreams at Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge, where sweeping alpine views set the stage for an unforgettable day. Exchange vows against a breathtaking natural backdrop, then celebrate into the evening across beautifully designed event spaces. Whether you're envisioning a grand celebration or an intimate gathering, their team offers flexible options to bring your vision to life.

[Learn More](#)



Boundary Ranch

For a wedding that feels uniquely rooted in the Rockies, Boundary Ranch offers a rustic, storybook setting surrounded by expansive mountain landscapes. Host your ceremony outdoors with panoramic views or opt for an indoor celebration, then elevate the experience with signature touches like a horse-drawn carriage for the couple or a wagon ride for guests between events. Ideal for larger gatherings in peak season, with flexible options available in the off-season for more intimate celebrations.

[Learn More](#)



Kananaskis Country Golf Course

Often described as an "emerald cathedral," the Kananaskis Country Golf Course offers a truly cinematic setting for your ceremony. Surrounded by lush fairways, forested greens, and dramatic alpine peaks, it's one of the most sought-after outdoor wedding venues in the region. From intimate ceremonies to larger celebrations with full catering, this venue blends natural beauty with refined service.

[Learn More](#)





EXPLORE 
Kananaskis

PHOTO CREDIT: DANIELLE EAGLESON